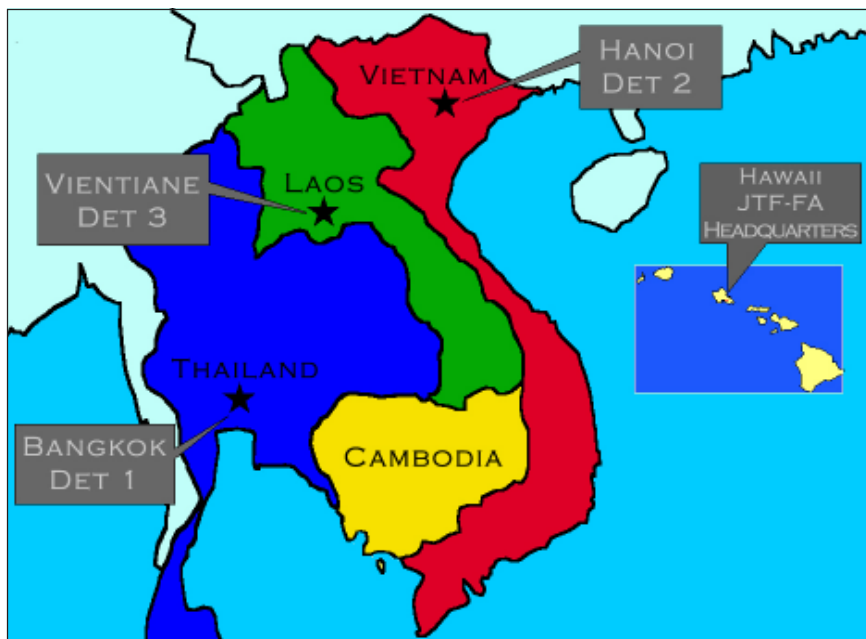


JOINT TASK FORCE FULL ACCOUNTING



THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING



JTF-FA is headquartered at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, with detachments located in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam and Vientiane, Laos.

JOINT TASK FORCE FULL ACCOUNTING

The mission of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans still unaccounted-for as a result of the war in Southeast Asia. JTF-FA operations include investigations, archival research, an Oral History Program and remains recovery operations.

The task force was created in response to Presidential, Congressional and public interest, as well as increased opportunities for case resolution. The opportunities included increased willingness of the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to share information regarding unaccounted for Americans, to include increased access to files, records and witnesses in these countries.

The task force grew out of the previously established Joint Casualty Resolution Center, an organization that began spearheading U.S. Government accounting efforts in 1973. As cooperation on the part of the Southeast Asian nations and opportunities for issue resolution increased, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, established the Joint Task Force on Jan. 23, 1992.

JTF-FA consists of more than 150 investigators, analysts, linguists and other specialists representing all four services and Department of De-

fense civilian employees. The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) provides overall policy guidance for accounting efforts. The task force's operations are supported by casualty resolution specialists, archeologists and anthropologists from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI), representatives from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO), Life Science Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) and augmentees from U.S. Pacific Command component commands. JTF-FA is headquartered at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, with detachments located in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam; and Vientiane, Laos. The detachment in Thailand also supports operations in Cambodia.

As of January 1992, there were 1,658 Americans unaccounted-for in Vietnam, 520 in Laos, 81 in Cambodia and 8 in China.

Not since the release of 591 American prisoners of war during "Operation Homecoming" in 1973 has an American, whose fate was unknown



Since Operation Homecoming in 1973, no live American, whose fate was unknown to the U.S., has returned alive from Southeast Asia.



A repatriated set of remains arrive at Hickam AFB with full honors. After arrival, they are transported to the Army's Central Identification Laboratory for identification.

to the U.S., returned alive from Southeast Asia. Over the years however, numerous first-hand reports have surfaced concerning Americans alleged to be alive in Southeast Asia. Intelligence organizations have resolved these reports through correlation with accounted-for personnel; others have proven to be fabrications.

Resolution of live sightings with the assistance of the Defense Intelligence Agency is JTF-FA's first priority. Although the U.S.

Government has been unable to obtain definitive evidence that Americans are still being detained against their will in Southeast Asia, the information available precludes ruling out that possibility. Therefore, actions to investigate live-sighting reports have and will continue to receive the highest priority. Should any report prove true, the U.S. Government will take decisive action to ensure the return of those involved.

Archival research is conducted by JTF-FA analysts to determine if materials contained in host-nation files can be correlated to any unaccounted-for Americans. Another aspect of JTF-FA's responsibility is carrying out field investigations. JTF-FA investigators and linguists examine areas de-



termined to be the location unaccounted-for Americans were known to be lost or last known to be alive. They also interview local villagers and provincial officials to determine if witnesses are available

Thousands of cubic feet of soil is sifted through 1/4 inch mesh screens to locate personal effects and possible remains.

to support the investi-

gation. The Oral History Program was established to identify and interview higher-ranking individuals who may possess information related to specific cases. Often these individuals provide names of other individuals who have knowledge of incidents involving Americans. Information obtained through this program has sometimes led investigators to crash or burial sites.

Task force specialists also locate and examine crash sites. Many of the unaccounted-for Americans were aircrew members lost when their aircraft crashed or was shot down. These crash sites are excavated with the goal of recovering remains and material evidence that will confirm the fate of the aircraft occupants.

If an investigation, witness interview, or crash site survey results in a strong probability of discovering remains, a recovery is conducted by JTF-



JTF-FA has expanded recovery operations to include underwater recoveries in shallow coastal areas.

FA and CILHI personnel and augmenting operations specialists. The remains are then transported to CILHI, located at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, where positive identification of the remains through anthropological and forensic analysis is the goal.

Since its inception in 1992, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting has conducted more than 3,500 case inves-

tigations and over 600 recovery operations.

JTF-FA investigators and analysts have also answered numerous questions about what happened to many of those whose fates were previously unknown. Many questions remain, some of which may never be fully answered, but Joint Task Force-Full Accounting is resolved to continue the investigation and recovery efforts until the fullest possible accounting is achieved.

THE FULL ACCOUNTING PROCESS

The largest portion of JTF-FA's mission is the investigation process. A great amount of time is committed to reviewing case files, conducting archival research and employing field investigation teams. During each Joint Field Activity, JTF-FA deploys Investigation Elements (IEs) to gather evidence which could lead to aircraft crash or ground battle sites. The IE interviews witnesses and negotiates with local officials to identify areas to excavate.

Based on a recommendation to excavate, a Recovery Element (RE) then excavates potential loss sites using strict scientific archeological methods. A civilian forensic anthropologist ensures the excavation site meets rigid scientific standards.

Once remains are found, they are repatriated and taken to the Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI), the largest forensic identification lab in the world. The remains are analyzed and subjected to the latest identification methods, to include mitochondrial DNA technology, which in recent years has resulted in many identifications.

THE REPATRIATION CEREMONY

The repatriation ceremony is a solemn ceremony in which possible human remains are turned over from foreign Government officials to the United States Government.



The remains are then ceremoniously placed in a transfer case for transport back to American soil.



An American flag is slowly unfolded and draped over each of the transfer cases.



The flag-draped transfer cases are then placed one by one onto the awaiting aircraft. Note that a member from each of the military services serves as honor guard.

ACHIEVING THE JTF-FA MISSION

The operational tempo at Joint Task Force-Full Accounting has never been greater. Each fiscal year, JTF-FA's goal is to execute 10 Joint Field Activities (JFAs) in Southeast Asia; four in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, five in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and one in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

A JFA lasts approximately 30 days. In Vietnam, a JFA is made up of 95 people, typically comprising five Recovery Elements and three Investigation Elements. Numerous other personnel with specialized skills such as communications and explosives ordnance disposal are also part of the team. In Laos and Cambodia, a JFA typically consists of 50 personnel comprising four Recovery Elements and one Investigation Element.



THE UNIT SEAL

The *black shield* is for the solemn thoughts of our fallen comrades. The *white cross* is the maltese cross. In the 11th and 12th centuries the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem wore the cross as their crest. They were known for their kindness towards the sick and the poor. The *white streaks* that lead away from the cross are "rays of hope." The *map* underneath the cross is that of Southeast Asia. The countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are represented. The *orange color* is the international sign of a non-combatant or humanitarian unit.